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Beaufort Gyre Exploration Project: Dispatch 24: Last Ice Ops

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Today is our last opportunity to deploy our last ITP. Time restraints due to lost time at the beginning of the cruise require us to recover Mooring D tomorrow, which means that we have only this day to find a suitable floe to deploy a prototype ITP with current sensor. The physical size of the current sensor requires that we drill a 2' diameter hole, which means that we need to bring a hole melter on the ice which will complicate the deployment and require more time. So we need another quick ice floe reconaiassance in less than ideal ice and weather conditions.

Quick it is. After being discouraged by landing on some beautifully flat old ice which was too thick for our operation today (> 3 m thick), we find a tiny 1.5 m ridge connected floe. Under most circumstances, this floe wouldn't be considered, but in desperation today it is chosen.

The personnel and gear are transported to the site, and the melting operation immediately runs into problems caused by the freezing cold temperatures. Once the system becomes operational, the hole is bored and the profiler installed in only 2 hours. Cold and exhausted, we are transported back to the ship off of the ice for the last time this cruise while snow begins to fall again.

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